

# Tooele School District Title IV, part A Programmatic Monitoring Highlights

## Overview

Tooele School District utilized Title IV, part A funds in innovative ways that truly lead to student success and improved outcomes. They have trained teachers, administrators, and other school staff on restorative practices, including a case management team who meets weekly reviewing situations and determining the best intervention for the students. They have hired refocus specialists in select elementary schools. Finally, they have used funds for the Goshute Language Preservation project.

## Refocus Specialists

The refocus specialists' work is about prevention and protective factors. These specialists are able to intervene and prevent students from being assigned serious consequences. They give students an outlet and safe place when emotions are high, and assist in helping the student and teacher find the true cause of the issue. This often allows the students to return to class ready to learn. Refocus specialists have improved the school culture and lightened the load on the school administrators and counselors. It is essential that the administrators, counselors, and the refocus specialist work together to ensure the right person is addressing the students' needs. The schools no longer need to resort to punitive consequences, like suspension, for all the "little" things happening in class.

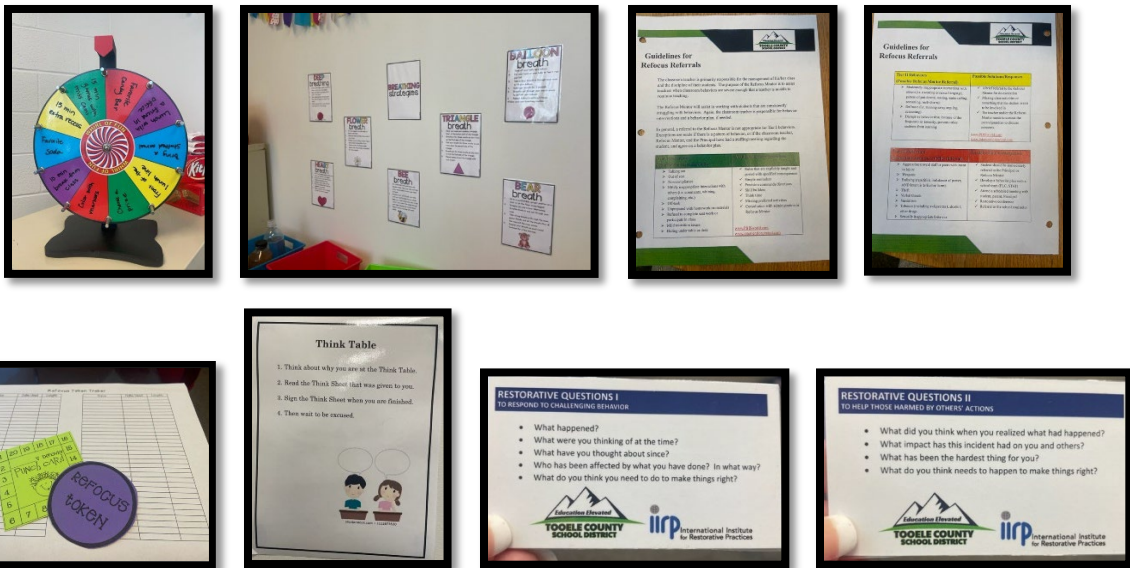
Refocus specialists work with teachers, counselors, administrators, and parents and families with the goal of the student no longer needing to leave class for refocus time. However, if they do need the time, it is there for them.

The two refocus specialists we met have backgrounds in abuse prevention, intervention, and social work. This unique background gives them the tools they need to support students, understand situations that may need more intervention, and how to talk with families to improve the students' situations both in school and at home.

## Data, Details, and Photos

- During the 2017-18 school year, Tooele County School District “piloted” the Refocus Mentor position at 2 elementary schools, Northlake and Sterling Elementary. Because of the success of this pilot, in the 2018-2019 school year, 8 more schools brought this position on-board.
- There are 10 elementary schools in Tooele School District with Refocus Mentors.
  - 3 funded out of Title IV-A funding
  - 7 funded with At-Risk funds, TSSA, Trustlands, or Title I funding
- Communication between the school and families has drastically improved. There is a focus to communicate home for positive student outcomes, in addition to the negative behaviors. This approach has had positive feedback from families.
- Relationships with a positive adult role model has been impactful. Each Refocus Mentor has established positive relationships with many students who were chronically in the office for behavior problems. They believe establishing a relationship is critical in preventing problem behaviors. Tooele School District also believes that being a positive adult role model is a protective factor for students.
- Attendance for students exhibiting chronic attendance problems has improved. Communication with families about the importance of attendance and the impact on students learning has been positive.
  - For example, at the schools with Refocus Mentors, there were 2541 phone calls home in the 2020-2021 school year and 2267 in the 2021-2022 school year regarding concern for student’s attendance. These phone calls were to encourage and educate parents and build a relationship between the school and home.
- Allows principals to be the Instructional Leader instead of constantly putting out “fires” of minor problem behaviors.
- Allows principals to identify staff who may need assistance and guidance with classroom management and address it in a proactive manner.

- Tooele schools have shifted to a restorative model in dealing with problem behaviors.
- Results of having a Refocus Mentor in our school:
  - Schools historically had Out-Of-School suspension (#1) and In-School suspension (#2) as the top 2 actions taken for problem behavior throughout Tooele County School District. With the implementation of Refocus Mentors and Restorative Practices, the following changes happened:
    - In the 2019-2020 school year In-School suspension (#1) and Out-Of-School suspension (#2)
    - During the 2020-2021 school year...Reteach Rules and Expectations (#1), Parent Contact by Phone (#2), Out-Of-School Suspension (#3), and In-School Suspension (#4)
    - 2021-2022 school year...Reteach Rules and Expectations (#1), Parent Contact by Phone (#2), In-School Suspension, (#3), and Out-of-School Suspension (#4)
  - Outcome: they are keeping kids in school and in class much more than prior years



## Goshute Language Preservation

Title IV, part A funds have been utilized to hire a part-time Goshute Language Specialist who will be teaching the tribal Goshute language to the two tribal bands in Tooele School District, as well as creating instructional materials for future use. Due to the lack of qualified educators fluent in the Goshute language, virtual

options were created to partner with an educator outside the district. This specialist will also travel to the schools in once a month for in-person instruction. All virtual sessions will be recorded and archived for future use.

## PHOTOS

